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May 26, 1994.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The government of Ontario has announced its intention to introduce legislative changes that would confer almost full recognition of homosexual relationships. Same-sex couples would have the right to apply to adopt children, receive spousal pension benefits when a partner dies, and qualify for other employee benefits. They would enjoy virtually the same rights as heterosexual couples.

The proposed legislation must be put into a context. The causes of homosexuality are not well understood, and in most cases, homosexuality is not something that is deliberately chosen. The Church makes a clear distinction between sexual orientation and sexual activity. There is a difference between being attracted to a person of the same sex and acting on those feelings. It is not sinful to have homosexual tendencies, but sexual acts between people of the same sex are morally wrong because they do not respect the plan of God in creating us male and female.

Because most people are heterosexual, those who are homosexual find themselves living in a world where they are "different". Because of this difference, homosexuals are often treated in ways that are cruel, deeply disrespectful, and discriminatory.

Like everyone else, homosexual persons need the experience of acceptance, friendship, and love from others. As *individuals*, they must have the same legal protections and basic human rights that all citizens of our province enjoy. Homosexual relationships, however, *are not, and indeed, cannot be conjugal relationships*. They do not qualify for the rights and benefits that are accorded to married and common-law couples.

Any attempt to promote a homosexual lifestyle as the equivalent of legal marriage must be vigorously opposed. It is a matter of considerable urgency, and to that end we are asking you to write your local member of provincial parliament to protest the proposed legislation. Please let the government know that in this, the International Year of the Family, the citizens of Ontario expect to see the traditional family protected and fostered as the very foundation of human society.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Toronto.